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**CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE GROUP**  
**CONFIDENTIAL**  
**INTELLIGENCE REPORT**

124622

COUNTRY Germany (French Zone)

DATE: 25X1A6a

INFO. [REDACTED]

SUBJECT Pirmasens Shoe Industry

DIST. 5 November 1947

PAGES 2

ORIGIN

25X1A6a [REDACTED]

SUPPLEMENT

25X1X6

1. The normal pre-war output of the Pirmasens shoe industry was approximately 3,000,000 pairs of leather shoes per month. In July 1947, that output was down to about 240,000 pairs, which has remained the average monthly output for several months. For the most part the production decrease is due to the combination of raw material shortages and the 1946-1947 dismantlings of modern American machinery. At present 2,000,000 pairs of shoes are stored in Pirmasens, blocked by French orders.
2. Formerly Pirmasens received leather from the largest European tanner of calfskins, the Heyl Company of Worms. Recently, however, Pirmasens has been reduced to utilizing whatever raw materials were available in the French Zone. Theysohn & Heumach, a Pirmasens firm, for instance, is producing small quantities of shoes and sandals from a synthetic material called Igelit, a by-product of buna at IG Farben, Ludwigshafen. Up to January 1947, the daily production of Igelit was sufficient for 10,000 pairs of shoes. The buna production at IG Farben dropped sharply after January as a direct result of the coal shortage. The importance of this source of supply is now negligible.
3. Principal purchasers of Pirmasens shoes are France, Africa, Switzerland, and the German black market. Oficomex handles all export shipment orders. It is known that large but unknown quantities of shoes flow into blackmarket channels. For instance, at the railway station of the small town of Ingelheim between Mainz and Bingen, 25,000 railroad tickets to Pirmasens were sold in the three-month period from May through July 1947. The explanation is that Ingelheim is a fruit-growing region, and during the past summer two small baskets of fruit bought one pair of shoes.

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 DDA Memo. 4 Apr 77  
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4. Two instances of French policy are noteworthy:
- Starting in January 1947, action was begun by order of the French authorities to consolidate the approximately 350 Pirmasens shoe enterprises into 150, ostensibly to save electric power and to set free manpower for use in other industries. This administrative and economic concentration was to have been completed by 1 October 1947. The 350 enterprises concerned were of all sizes, ranging from 1200 workers and employees at the Rheinberger firm down to small shops employing only two persons.
  - The Pirmasens firm Theysohn & Heumach applied for and received permission to buy a large tract of land on which to build a factory for the manufacture of gelit shoes and sandals. Subsequently, the firm was requested to sell its production patents to French interests. It refused, and permission to buy the land in question was thereupon withdrawn.
5. Source states that on the German market Pirmasens is not in a position to compete with shoe industries in the British (Termelskirchen) and American (Hanau, Offenbach, Nürnberg) Zones, and that this is due to the following factors:
- Dismantling of modern machinery.
  - Disproportionately high production costs resulting from inefficient utilization of the means of production.
  - Over-aged workers

It is not anticipated that the Pirmasens shoe industry will be able to compete in the world market for some time to come

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